

## the facts about osteoporosis

According to Ann Marie Moran, R.N., osteoporosis is a disease of the bones that occurs when the body loses too much bone, makes too little bone, or both.



Because people cannot feel their bones weakening, osteoporosis is often called a "silent disease." Despite its silence, osteoporosis is a serious threat, increasing a person's risk for bone breaks from falls. According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation one in three women and one in five men over age 50 will experience osteoporotic fractures. A woman's risk of breaking a hip due to osteoporosis is equal to her risk of breast, ovarian and uterine cancer.

Under a microscope, healthy bones look like a honeycomb, but when a person has osteoporosis, the holes and spaces in the honeycomb are much larger than in healthy bones. Osteoporotic bones become less dense than healthy bones, weaken, and are more susceptible to breaks.

Some risk factors for osteoporosis are uncontrollable, and include age, gender, family history, low body weight (being small and thin), and a history of broken bones. Controllable risk factors include not eating enough fruits and vegetables; consuming too much protein, sodium and caffeine; a sedentary lifestyle; smoking; and excessive consumption of alcohol. Insufficient calcium and vitamin D intake are other controllable risk factors for osteoporosis. Speak with a physician about osteoporosis and the role that both diet and exercise can play in preventing broken bones and negative effects of this disease.

*Ann Marie Moran is a registered nurse and care coordinator with The Eddy Visiting Nurse Association and VNSNY Choice Health Plans. Learn more about The Eddy Visiting Nurse Association and VNSNY Choice Health Plans by calling 1-888-867-6555 or visiting [www.vsnynchoice.org](http://www.vsnynchoice.org).*